

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Claims 1-2, 5, 9 and 13 directed to an allowable product. Pursuant to the procedures set forth in MPEP § 821.04(B), claims 3-4, 6 and 10, directed to a different species, previously withdrawn from consideration as a result of a restriction requirement, are hereby rejoined and fully examined for patentability under 37 CFR 1.104.
2. Because all claims previously withdrawn from consideration under 37 CFR 1.142 have been rejoined, **the restriction requirement as set forth in the Office action mailed on 11 December 2007 is hereby withdrawn**. In view of the withdrawal of the restriction requirement as to the rejoined inventions, applicant(s) are advised that if any claim presented in a continuation or divisional application is anticipated by, or includes all the limitations of, a claim that is allowable in the present application, such claim may be subject to provisional statutory and/or nonstatutory double patenting rejections over the claims of the instant application. Once the restriction requirement is withdrawn, the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 121 are no longer applicable. See *In re Ziegler*, 443 F.2d 1211, 1215, 170 USPQ 129, 131-32 (CCPA 1971). See also MPEP § 804.01.

Allowable Subject Matter

3. Claims 1-6, 9-10 and 13 are allowed. Considering claim 1, the prior art does not teach an ultrasonic probe second signal electrically connected to said first signal electrode; a heat conduction material which is placed inside said backing load member

and which includes a thermal conductivity greater than a thermal conductivity of said backing load member, said heat conduction material being provided separately from said second signal electrode. Considering claim 2, the prior art does not teach an ultrasonic probe a plurality of second signal electrodes each of which is electrically connected to a respective one of said first signal electrodes; one or more sheet-shaped heat conduction materials which are placed in a parallel along an array direction of said piezoelectric elements and depth direction inside said backing load member and whose thermal conductivities are greater than a thermal conductivity of said backing load member, said heat conduction materials being provided separately from said second signal electrodes.

4. References cited but that did not meet all the limitations of the applicant's claims are listed on the 892 sheet.

Conclusion

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to BRYAN P. GORDON whose telephone number is (571)272-5394. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 8:00-5:30, Friday 7:30-4:00.

6. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Walter Benson can be reached on 571-272-2227. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

7. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Walter Benson/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2837

/Bryan P Gordon/
Examiner, Art Unit 2834